

# FIRST CLASS

The Class of 2000 has a special ring to it, and Boise State's first group of graduates of the new millennium has many interesting success stories.

Here is a sampling of those who received their diplomas this year.

## SUCCESS A GOOD BET FOR THIS FUTURE VET

By Sherry Squires

When Joel Davis completed his education at Boise State University, it marked a personal milestone for both him and his teacher, mentor and friend — his mother.

Davis, who was homeschooled since he was in the fourth grade, completed his studies in biology this spring and was one of only 36 students accepted into the Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine for fall 2000.

His mother, Zina Greer, worked a variety of jobs and

ran her own sewing business so she could homeschool Joel and his three siblings. Davis says the many sacrifices that his single mother made instilled in him a strong work ethic and the values that helped him succeed.

"It taught me a lot of perseverance and respect, and that if you want to get things done, you have to work hard," he says. "I am a Christian and I believe that God directs us in our lives. I know God opens doors."

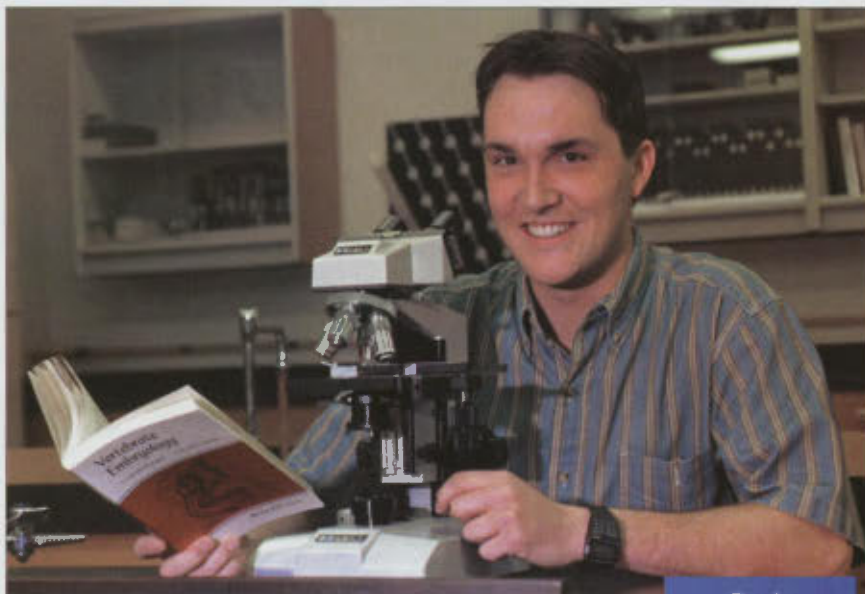
Greer says it was those

same strong Christian beliefs that held her family together during difficult times. Davis lived at home for all five years of college so that he could save money and help his family.

"You couldn't find a more devoted son," she says. "I always told him that he wasn't my husband, that he didn't have to carry this burden. But he was the kind of kid who did."

Davis will leave home for the first time this fall to pursue a career that he's sure he'll enjoy. Davis says he has always loved working with animals.

"Things worked out for me," he says. "I'm going to go study hard and become a veterinarian." □



JOHN KELLY PHOTO

Davis



## FASCINATION FOR FAR EAST OPENS DOORS

By Justin Endow

Aminda Smith is not concerned about the limited number of options for someone with a Ph.D. in East Asian studies and Chinese history.

All that matters to her is the process of earning that degree.

"If I knew I wasn't going to find a job when I'm done, I'd still get the Ph.D.," says Smith. "I find a lot of value in the process of academic study."

She will have ample time and opportunity to pursue her love of learning. Smith recently was awarded a fellowship to Princeton University to work for her doctorate, which also will include work on Japan and Asian American studies.

The fellowship includes five years of tuition and fees, \$15,000 each year for living

expenses and summer stipends to cover research expenditures or travel to China.

Smith, a Boise State Top Ten Scholar and history graduate, will study the Chinese language at Beijing Normal University this summer through a partnership with Princeton. This intensive program will squeeze a year of language study into one summer.

"This is my chance to catch up," she says. "I studied Chinese abroad for one summer, but I wasn't able to work on the language during my undergraduate program."

History professor Shelton Woods inspired Smith to focus on East Asia and



Smith

China. She always had been interested in the length and constancy of China's history and culture, but Woods' course "History of Eastern Civilizations" heightened her enthusiasm.

"He makes history an emotional experience," Smith says. "I discovered this whole fascinating world in Chinese history and culture. Dr. Woods painted such a vivid picture."

Now, after working on research grants, presenting

papers at academic conferences and working as a teaching assistant for both Woods and history professor Nick Casner, she is preparing to become a Shelton Woods-like professor to future

students interested in East Asia.

"I'm so glad I came to Boise State," says Smith. "I had professors all the way through who were interested in teaching. I got to know my instructors very well, and they provided the opportunities to study outside the classroom. I hope to do the same for others." □

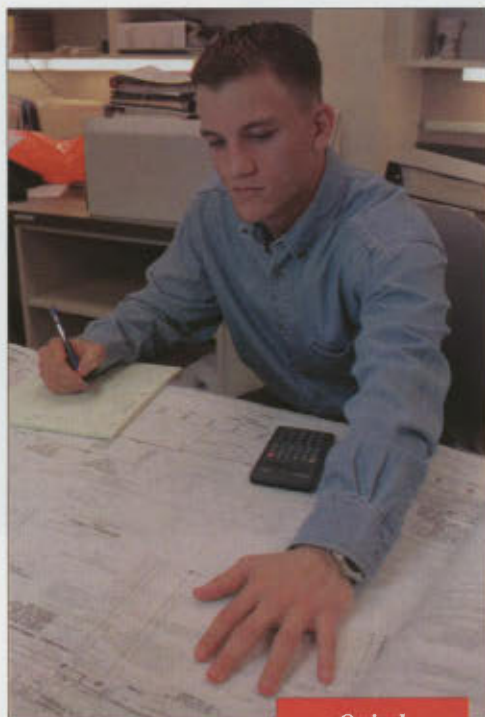
## ALL-AMERICAN WRESTLES WITH NEW CHALLENGE

By Sherry Squires

Larry Quisel started wrestling when he was 6 years old. He eventually wrestled his way to a scholarship to Boise State.

And in May, after a highly successful athletic career, the 23-year-old traded in his years on the mat for a civil engineering degree and a promising future.

Finishing second in the 157-pound division, Quisel helped lead the Bronco wrestling team to a 12th-place finish at the NCAA National Championships in March. His runner-up finish gave Quisel All-America honors for the second straight year. Thanks partly to Quisel, the Broncos had



Quisel

wrestling title.

Quisel appeared at the NCAA Championships four times, placing third at nationals in 1999 in addition to his second-place finish this year after a narrow loss in the final match to a wrestler from the University of Pennsylvania.

Quisel says wrestling has always been his outlet and his passion. It made him be self-disciplined.

It made him work hard. After practice he remembers wrestling with his tired body

and mind to convince himself to crack open the books.

He says wrestling meets often required him to miss class, so he had to struggle to keep up and to succeed academically.

His effort paid off. Quisel is now employed with a general contracting firm, and will put his newly acquired education to work this summer on engineering projects in southern Idaho.

While he will miss the challenges wrestling brought, he won't miss the time it took. "I accomplished everything I wanted to accomplish in wrestling," he says. "Now I'm looking forward to doing other things in my life." □

their most successful wrestling season ever and earned their first Pac-10

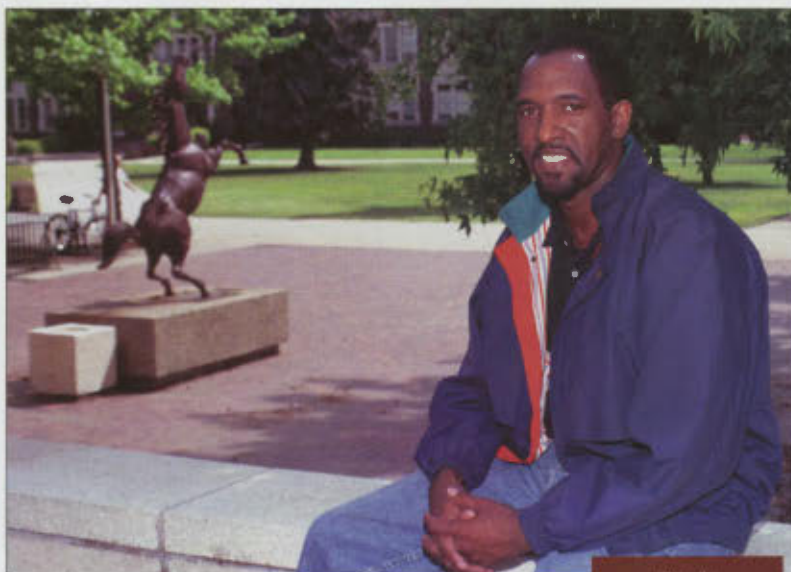


## MAKING THE GRADE FROM THE MOTOR CITY

By Bob Evancho

Two thousand miles is a long way to come just to pick up a diploma. But for Detroit resident Sam Doyle, there was never any doubt that he would participate in the university's May 13 commencement and formally receive his master's degree in instructional and performance technology (IPT). Besides, he wanted to meet his professors and classmates — most of them for the first time.

Thanks to the IPT's distance-learning option, Doyle is now among the program's growing number of graduates who have earned their master's via computer conferencing — an online process that allows students to enroll in the program, "attend" classes at their convenience, study wherever they can take a laptop computer and complete the program from any-



Doyle

where in the world. In fact, of the 34 IPT graduates from the Class of 2000, Doyle and 17 others went the distance-learning route.

So on the day before he received his degree, Doyle set foot on the Boise State campus for the first time. He says distance was no deterrent. "I'm here to get that sheepskin," he says with a smile. "I worked too hard for this to *not* come and get it

myself."

After earning a business degree from Wayne State University, Doyle, 43, embarked on a career as a performance improvement specialist — a career that has spanned three decades and has included employers such as Ford, Unisys and a large law firm. For the last seven years he has worked for Detroit Edison. He is now in the process of leaving the

public utility to start his own consulting business in instructional design and job performance improvement.

Doyle says he considers Boise State's IPT program tailor-made for someone in his profession. "Honestly, it was the most rewarding educational experience I have ever had," he says. "I was able to collaborate not only with the Boise State professors, but also

with fellow students — people in my line of work — from all over the world.

"The program is designed to facilitate adult learners with the understanding that students in this program are self-motivated. It was an unbelievable amount of work, but it was worth it."

Just like his trip to Boise. □

## REPORTER SHOWS SHE HAS THE WRITE STUFF

By Sherry Squires

It took playing in rock bands, managing a restaurant and a plethora of potential majors, but today Kendra Martinez feels good about where she is.

"It took me 16 years to get my degree," she says. "But that was just me trying to find my niche."

Martinez earned her communications/journalism degree from Boise State in December 1999. She is now working as a reporter for *The Idaho Statesman*.

But there was nothing direct about the path she took to get there.

After finishing high school in 1984, Martinez attended

Idaho State University for a year before leaving to start a rock band in Pocatello. Then she managed a restaurant. Then she moved to Boise and started an all-female rock band.

While taking classes at Boise State, she shuffled between majors in preveterinary studies, economics, pre-med, business and pre-law. She was in and out of school. She was on academic probation for two years.

But, "When I got to the communication department at Boise State, it felt like home," she says. So she stayed a while.

"Communication classes made me think beyond myself, to examine issues from a different perspective."

Martinez' grades improved and she found lasting friends



Martinez

in her college professors.

She began working as a night clerk at *The Idaho Statesman* in 1996. After registering for a community reporting class at Boise State, she was invited by an editor to work as a neighborhood reporter, writing fea-

ture stories for the paper.

She is currently the western Ada County reporter for the *Statesman*.

"I found what I enjoy doing," she says. "I enjoy talking to different people, hearing their stories." □



## FIDDLER ON THE MOVE HEADS TO TEXAS

By Sherry Squires

Her "fiddle friends" thought she was crazy. Her college professors were skeptical of a fiddler who wanted to study classical music.

But Roberta Rast bridged the two music forms. And the music/business graduate will take both with her this summer as she heads to Austin, Texas, to pursue her passion.

Rast began playing the fiddle when she was 5 and took lessons until she was in junior high school. She went on to win several national titles in the junior and young adult divisions. But she couldn't see much of a future for a fiddler in collegiate-



Rast

level music courses. So she began playing violin in her junior high and high school orchestras.

When it came time for col-

lege, Rast set off with her fiddle in hand.

"I learned a lot that first year," she says. "I had to hold the instrument a different way. I had to play a different way. I went home in tears."

But she returned even more determined.

"Fiddling was always so much fun," she says. "But I learned to love classical music.

As soon as you really dive in you see that it's so much more involved and more emotional."

Rast hopes to find a spot for her instrument and both sets of strings — one for fiddle and one for violin — in the Austin entertainment world.

"I figured I had to pick a town with a large music business — Nashville, Austin, New York or L.A.," she says. "I know more people in Austin."

She hopes to record, work for an entertainment or talent company and perform. Her love of classical strings may lead her to audition for the Austin Symphony. And she'll likely continue teaching lessons to other young musicians, a staple that helped her work her way through college.

"We'll see how open the music business is to a fiddler who plays classical music," she says. □

## DETERMINATION OVERCOMES DISABILITY

By Justin Endow

One October day in 1995 Dominik Brueckner was swimming, diving and running on a Mediterranean beach. But after one fateful dive, he was paralyzed from the chest down.

His backbone was broken in two places. An experimental new procedure was his best hope for repairing his fractured first vertebra and regaining use of his arms and hands. It required him to lie motionless for 10 weeks, followed by months of grueling rehabilitation.

The procedure worked.

Since then, these memories are nothing more than images of the distant past. Today Brueckner focuses only on his future.

"It was tough to find out that I would be unable to move at all for 10 weeks," says Brueckner, a university Top Ten scholar. "But it gave

me time to let my situation sink in. By the time I got out, I was so happy that I was able to do things again I didn't even think about being in a wheelchair."

It's that attitude toward his life that has given Brueckner, 24, the resolve and courage to accomplish so much. Less than a year after he was released from the hospital, he made plans to study in the United States for a year.

In August 1997, Brueckner, who is fluent in five languages, traveled from Saarbruecken, Germany, to Boise State, the school he determined would be his best financial choice.

He chose to pursue English literature and environmental studies. He got involved in campus organizations and activities. As the



Brueckner

1997-98 school year concluded, he decided to finish his degree in Boise.

"I think that was one of the best decisions I ever made," he says. "I've had so many opportunities at Boise State."

Opportunities he created for himself. He was a mem-

ber of both university national honor societies, the English honor society, the International Student Association and the Alternative Mobility Adventure Seekers. He also wrote a weekly movie review column for the student newspaper.

And next fall, he'll take his love for film to San Francisco State University, where he will begin an intensive master's program in film studies. Brueckner

will be tackling his third major transition in five years, but to him, it is the unknown that makes life interesting.

"I will always cherish my experiences at Boise State," he says. "But I'm looking forward to new challenges and new experiences too." □